

CYCLING
NOVA SCOTIA



BLUE ROUTE



WHAT WE HEARD!

Your thoughts on what Active Transportation (AT) should look like in Nova Scotia



"Connected AAA Infrastructure"

Connected systems of protected bike lanes, paved shoulders, AT trails, multi-use pathways. AT networks designed for all ages and abilities. Continued support for the Blue Route network.

"Funding"



More funding for organizations and municipalities to implement AT projects, less complicated funding streams and applications. More e-bike rebates.



"Multi-modal Transit/AT"

More investment for multi-modal transportation (ie. transit and commuter rail) to support use of active transportation year round.



"AT Priority in Street Design"

Streets designed with AT as priority over vehicles. Safer road crossings and intersections, lower speed limits, streets designed to be accessible and equitable.

"Political Support"

Political will, support, and commitment on making active transportation a priority.



"Education"

Educational campaigns on benefits of AT, sharing the road safely, and encouraging active lifestyles. Education in schools & driver education.



Thanks for Sharing!

A summary of public thoughts on active transportation in Nova Scotia- Cycling Nova Scotia. June 5, 2023.

The Provincial government has made an exciting (generational and unprecedented!) commitment for an Active Transportation (AT) Strategy for the province of Nova Scotia. An active transportation strategy sets out ways to ensure better options for active transportation including things such as walking, cycling, and rolling.

Active transportation improves our health and well-being while also getting us from point A to B. It is vital to our economy and tourism sectors and plays an essential role in connected and consistent multi-modal transportation systems that support more equitable, vibrant, livable communities. Increases in active transportation reduce healthcare costs, noise pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, and improve air quality.

Cycling Nova Scotia sees the Provincial AT Strategy (set to be completed in 2023) as an opportunity to ensure that past investments in active transportation are met with future ambition and vision. Cycling Nova Scotia is being consulted by the government on the AT Strategy and we reached out to gather your thoughts on how you believe active transportation should look in Nova Scotia.

You shouted from the rooftops!

(Metaphorically, of course), but the response was quite impressive! We heard from Nova Scotians all around the province. From small rural towns, to the urban HRM, we heard from 136 of you; many representing organizations and groups of people.

Cycling Nova Scotia has read each and every one of the 500+ responses to the questions we asked in our form that was posted from May 23 until June 1, 2023, and have summarized the feedback we received below. The feedback we collected was not submitted directly to the Province, however it did and will continue to inform Cycling Nova Scotia's feedback during our engagement with the Province.

Thank you for your participation! Key feedback themes are outlined in the graphic to the left while a general summary of feedback is below.

What do you believe has been most impactful in increasing access to active transportation in Nova Scotia?

- Connected and safe AT Infrastructure including paved shoulders (smooth), paths, MUPs and protected, separated lanes. *“If I won't let my kids in it, it doesn't count.”*
- Traffic calming measures
- Increases in one-way streets.
- Better street signage for AT use.
- Federal and Provincial signed agreements and funding.
- E-bikes and government incentives for e-bikes
- Development of the Blue Route, Trans Canada Trail, and conversion of rail to trail.
- AT trails that prohibit motorized vehicles.
- Pressure from community organizations and non-profits on local governments to fund AT.
- Bus lanes and improvements to transit encouraging multi-modal transportation.
- Increases in gasoline prices.
- Allowing bikes and pedestrians on MacDonald Bridge, busses, and ferries.
- Mountain biking facilities that encourage people to get comfortable with cycling again.
- Promotion of healthy, active lifestyles.
- Increased communication between levels of government- municipal and provincial representatives are beginning to listen to public's economical and environmental needs and act on AT for people interested or in need of AT options.
- The Integrated Mobility Plan adoption in HRM.
- Increased public education through campaigns such as “Share the Road”, and “1 meter rule”

What do you believe has been missing from efforts to increase access to active transportation in Nova Scotia?

- Complete government support- a solid plan, funding opportunities, and specific measurable goals.
- Capitalizing on highway paving projects- always paving shoulders with any road re-paving.
- Requirements for all new roads to have AT infrastructure.
- Maintenance programs for AT infrastructure.
- Public education campaigns for motorists on AT use, for businesses and public on AT infrastructure benefits to health and economy, that AT infrastructure is a better return on investment for transportation. Campaigns to encourage cultural shift.
- Social marketing campaigns to encourage AT for short trips.
- Connected AT infrastructure and more investment in infrastructure.
- Strong government policies that come with adequate funding, regulations, initiatives to change mindsets among the public, and relevant infrastructure and incentives.
- More support for active transportation only on trails.
- More protected bike lanes in urban areas and more paved shoulders in rural areas. Less cars/parking in urban areas.
- Political will, support, and commitment.
- More priority on active transportation road users than vehicles, especially near schools.
- More priority for accessibility and equity.
- More engagement with cyclists.
- More focus on access/entry points to the urban areas.

- More financial incentives for those purchasing bikes/e-bikes.
- Less “red tape”- enabling projects to go ahead more quickly.
- Bike safety education included courses in schools.
- More cycle parking in commercial/residential buildings and changing facilities at work places to encourage cycling.
- Safe cycling infrastructure leading up to areas of trail, to encourage cycling to trail networks instead of requiring driving to them.
- Policy to allow municipalities to lower speed limits.

What are some of the **challenges** you believe need to be addressed to improve active transportation in Nova Scotia?

- More funding for Infrastructure in rural communities.
- Required cultural shift and education around misinformation (ie. People using AT are an inconvenience, the notion that “cyclists don’t pay their fair share”, taking away bike parking decreases business, cycling is just for recreation, etc)
- Safety
- Cost sharing AT facilities between municipal and provincial government.
- Lack of political and government support in prioritizing walking and cycling as transportation- looking at it solely as recreational.
- Multi-modal transportation investments (ie. public transit, commuter rail)
- Successful sharing of trails and highways with other types of users, specific to the area and amount of use.

- More government investment in rail-to-trail projects on abandoned/unused rail lines.
- Making it easier for local community/non-profit groups to access funding for AT projects. Less “red tape” and complicated applications.
- Political will and support.
- Training for road construction staff to recognize road hazards for AT users as well as vehicle users.
- Road widths being narrow making it difficult and more expensive to implement AT infrastructure- more government investment for those instances.
- Funding options for quick implementation of AT plans to reduce the amount of outdated active transportation plans that were not implemented.
- Prioritization of staff resources for AT projects.
- Government consistency and communication through levels.
- Increased AT work in ANS and Mi’kmaq communities.

Five years from now, what would you like to see happening to support active transportation in Nova Scotia?

- More funding for AT available for infrastructure and for organizations/municipalities to implement AT projects.
- Continued Blue Route development.
- Wider paved shoulders (1.2-1.5m).
- A growth in connected AT infrastructure throughout the province, especially all ages and abilities (AAA) infrastructure (ie. Separated/protected bike lanes, connected trails, etc), with consistent signage.

- Complete streets.
- More areas where vehicles are not permitted.
- Safer active transportation connections around schools.
- More frequent maintenance of AT infrastructure.
- More political will and commitment.
- Provincial and municipal governments encouraging the location of public facilities in areas that are accessible using active transportation.
- A cultural shift for all mode users respecting and valuing active transportation.
- Education campaigns for general population (Share the Road, benefits of AT, etc) with an emphasis on youth who can bring about a cultural shift for the next generation.
- Streets designed with active transportation as priority over vehicles. Safer road crossings and intersections. Cycling priority for left turns (not waiting two light cycles)
- Trails designed for families, not OHVs.
- More Support for access to safe exercise options to improve community health.
- A government and public understanding that active transportation is not a recreational activity, but an integral part of a provincial transportation system.
- Rail Trail ownership within HRM, owned by HRM, shifting burden on volunteers.
- For NS to have a trail the entire way around the province, not just paved highways.
- “For NS to be the most accessible place in Canada to cycle”
- More access to bike rentals and trails. Government supported bike share systems, including e-bikes, and cargo e-bikes for families/groceries/shopping/utility. Ability to borrow/rent bike trailers.
- Less vehicles on the roads; more people living active lifestyles.
- More cycling routes/paved shoulders on tourism destinations and between rural communities.
- AT infrastructure including bike parking and lanes mandatory for all new streets and old.
- Cycling education in schools and access to bikes for children/families who cannot afford them.
- More bicycle recycling/exchange/repair programs.
- Seniors bicycling programs/awareness.
- Mandatory Bike parking/storage in apartment buildings and commercial spaces.
- More traffic calming measures (speed limits, physical barriers etc).
- More incentives for AT use (ie. Rebates on all bikes, higher rebates on e-bikes than e-vehicles to be more equitable to those who cannot purchase vehicles.
- More driver education and police education on cycling.
- Support for a powerful lobby to influence governments and politicians.
- Investment in multi-modal transportation.
- A comprehensive At Strategy that has funding and that will be implemented.
- That we have achieved “vision zero”.
- That taxpayer savings in road infrastructure, health, environment, transportation and climate change are viewed nationally as the best in Canada.
- Free public transportation. More bus lanes.
- More events celebrating AT (ie. Shutting down streets for day(s) open for AT only.
- More public awareness and enforcement of vehicles passing cyclists with inadequate space for safety.
- A reduction in cycling/vehicle collisions.
- Government consistency and communication through levels.
- More paved rail.
- More support for accessibility.
- Consistent funding.
- Investment in cycling tourism.
- City Planning policies that allow and encourage more density and complete neighborhoods so suburbs do not need to rely on vehicular transportation.
- All communities having cycling access to their main streets/commercial areas.
- Municipalities allowed to lower speed limits.

A sincere thank you to all who shared their thoughts with us!

We'd like to note that there were also many suggestions for specific intersection upgrades and route connections across the province in addition to the summarized comments above. Cycling Nova Scotia has kept all feedback on record that will help us inform future advocacy work.

We value your feedback and appreciate the time you took to share. It is clear that many Nova Scotians value active transportation and have a collective interest in its benefits for the environment, economy, and community health.

Cycling Nova Scotia is pleased to be a key stakeholder and to continue advocating for an ambitious and well-organized AT strategy.